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Immediate Release

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Environment Department Seeks Public Input on Water Quality Standards

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), Surface Water Quality Bureau (SWQB) is initiating its triennial review of New Mexico's surface water quality standards (20.6.4 NMAC – Standards for Interstate and Intrastate Surface Waters). This review is an opportunity for the public to comment on the standards that NMED uses to protect the state's rivers, lakes and streams.

States are required by the federal Clean Water Act to review surface water quality standards at least once every three years. After an initial public participation process and series of public meetings, the State will hold a public hearing to review applicable standards and, as appropriate, to modify and adopt surface water quality standards.

A series of public meetings will be held to present a summary of the SWQB's proposed revisions, field questions from the public regarding the proposed revisions (see below on how to obtain copies of the document), and to solicit suggestions for additions or revisions to the surface water quality standards.

Meetings will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 pm in:

- **Roswell:** March 24, U. S. Bureau of Land Management District Library, 2909 W. 2nd St.
- **Las Cruces:** March 25, NMSU Campus, Hernandez Hall, Room 103 (formerly Engineering Complex II)
- **Santa Fe:** March 26, Wild Oats Community Room located behind Wild Oats Market, 1090 South St. Francis Drive
- **Farmington:** March 27, Farmington Civic Center Room C, 200 W. Arrington Street

Some of the revisions being considered include re-organizing the document to make it easier to read, updating various surface water quality criteria in accordance with newly published U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) guidance, reclassifying various designated uses, and updating total dissolved solids (TDS) and other criteria to be more protective of the livestock watering, irrigation, and wildlife habitat designated uses.

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The public comment period on these draft revisions began February 21 at 8:00 a.m. MST and will end April 7 at 5:00 p.m. MDT. **Formal comments for inclusion in the public record should be submitted in writing to the SWQB at the meetings or to John Montgomery** (if possible, please submit an electronic copy as well; the SWQB will provide a confirmation of receipt for electronic mail submissions) at P. O. Box 26110, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502, or e-mail:

john_montgomery@nmenv.state.nm.us. The draft revisions to the surface water quality standards are available upon request, free of charge, and are posted on the Surface Water Quality Bureau's website, which can be found at: <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/swqb/>

For additional information, contact Stephanie Stringer, Outreach Coordinator, NMED Surface Water Quality Bureau, at (505) 827-0418, or Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED, at (505) 827-0314.

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